UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to File No.

Declassification authority derived from FBI Automatic Declassification Guide, issued May 24, 2007

Screened by NARA (RF) 08-15-2025 FOIA # 89672 DOCID: 34702867

Tampa, Florida
August 3, 1964

AMERICAN UNDERGROUND (AUG)

The following is quoted from "The Tampa Tribune" Tampa, Florida, July 24, 1964:

"Klansman Eyes Rights Law Fight"

"A Ku Klux Klan group that went underground when the U. S. Supreme Court issued its school desegregation order in 1954 is being reorganized to fight the civil rights law, its leader announced yesterday.

"Bill Hendrix of Oldsmar, who says he was imperial wizard of the Southern Knights and Northern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, said the new organization will be known as the American Underground (AUG).

"'We will cooperate with all klan groups and other right wing groups who realize that the Negro agitators of today were trained in Communist schools,' Hendrix said.

"'We will fight legally so far as we can, and violently if necessary,' he said.

"Hendrix said the new organization was starting a fund to protect 'right wing members against unscrupulous court orders.' He claims membership in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

"Hendrix said there are about 30 different klan groups now with no connection among each other. He called for the groups to unite under one leadership and 'fight violence with violence if necessary.'

"Hendrix said the Southern Knights and Northern Knights had been a national organization but had never affiliated with other klan groups.

157-876-1

"He said the organization accepted the Supreme Court decision of 1954 because it involved public funds.

SEARCHED ..... INDEXED
SERIALIZED ..... FILED
AUG 6 - 1964
FBI — NEW ORLEANS

"'We accepted the court order. But the civil rights bill, under the public accommodations section, is not a matter of public funds but is a federal take-over of all business and privileges,' he said.

"Hendrix challenged recently published remarks by a national columnist (Drew Pearson) that the klan was on the attorney general's subversive list.

"He said the Georgia klan and its associate organizations had been placed on the list back in 1947, but that the Southern Knights and Northern Knights that he represented were never placed on the list. He claimed that no existing klan group has ever been on the subversive list."

A characterization of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan appears in the appendix attached hereto.

On July 27, 1964, a source with whom insufficient contact has been had to establish his reliability made available a copy of a letter signed by BILL HENDRIX dated "Sunday," addressed to Mr. JAMES J. COOKE, 203½ College Avenue, Clinton, Mississippi. This letter is as follows:

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Best available image

Box 47 Oldsmar, Florida

Sunday

Mr. James J. Cooke
203½ College Ave.
Clinton, Miss.

Dear Mr. Cook:

XXXXXXXXXXXX I have received your letter for information on the Florida Klan, any literature that may have been put out by our groupe would be several years old as we disbanded in 1958 and accepted the integration order of the United States Supreme Court as that order involved "The use of public funds" They (The U.S. Supreme Court) simply ruled) that where public funds were used it must be used equally for the benefit of all people. At the time we contacted many of the top political leaders of the south, including your state and told them to really give this ruling a test by closing all of the schools of a state and not just a few which integrated. This action would have complied with the ruling and the law, as there is no Federal law which says a state must have a school..No political leader of the south was willing to comply with the law in any way.. They didn't want integration, they wanted public funds used to promote themselves and to hell with everybody else.

Here in Florida we have a section of our state constitution which says that "Colored and white shall not attend the same school" We could get no state politician to take this section through the courts nor through the legislature for a refrendum, which is due process of law..On our own we sued in the Florida Supreme Court and lost..Then in the Federal district court, where we also lost, but for good reason, The Federal Judge here gave us plenty of time and discuss the case with us throughly, then he asked us if we thought one Federal Judge should order a state legislature to perform their duties in regards to public funds..That it was the duty of the legislature of a state to see that state constitutional provisions were carried out, that he as a Federal Judge was not going to order a state legislature to carry out a provision that the U. S. Supreme Court has already ruled on " That where public funds were involved those funds must be used equally..We agreed with this Judge.. On further investigation in your state and others of the south we found that the Politician was at fault..That these politicians would change with the wind from segregation to integration according to the vote change..Ten years after the school cases of 1954..State Politications are still running on segragation platforms and winning on them.. Here in Florida our Governor elect in the Democratic party ran on an open segragation plat form and won by a large majority...Our Republican Governor Candidate elect is trying to out segragate the democratic nominee and has made a statement that if he is elected "He will not enforce the Federal civil rights law" This Civil rights law was passed by congress (Not by the Supreme Court) after a long bitter fight in the U. S. Senate.. Each section must be ruled on by the Supreme Court and until such ruling by the Supreme Court..It is the Law...All of the rabble rousing and raising hell is not going to do any good and will only strengthen the hold of the lying, double crossing southern politician.

Good men and womeh are getting into trouble by people who are not fit to wipe their feet..You asked me about the Klan..I wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole..Except to try to keep some of their better element who were fooled into memberehip..OUT OF TROUBLE...

A few years back when our groupe announced that I was resigning and that our groupe was disbanding "Because we saw the Supreme Court decision as the law, That we would not use violence to violate this law..THAT THERE WAS NO FORCED INTEGRATION..nobody was told they could not move..Nobody was tied down to a place or a school.. We received more abuse and threats from certain Klan leaders than from all the communist put togather...

3

Best available image

We were accused of selling out to the Jews, The Communist, The Niggers, Ralph McGill and about every other kind of abuse that could be thrown.

Our only object in organizing in the first place was to educate the grass roots sections of the south of the dangers of communism, from the time of our existence, which was many years ago we never affiliated with any other Klan groups and never barred any person because of religion.. We had hundreds of Catholics in our groupes and at the time of our disbandment was the largest national groupe of the time...

Many of our speakings over the years was exactly the opposite of what other Klan leaders were speaking about..For instance we would move into a small heavely populated community, get large crowds, and tell them that certain negro outfits or white outfits were training negroes to come into small communities grab some white woman and leave in a hurry..That if this happened in their village, not to grab their guns and start killing innocent people but to go to their law officers and if they needed help to offer their help, if they did not to go home and take care of their families...We were never harressed by the F. B. I. nor nay law enforce ment body, we were never on the subversive list nor in all our years did we ever have a single member in trouble or in court except in Grand Jury investigations..Our members were always instructed to tell the truth to the courts .

A few days ago we announced we were re organizing and calling this organization the "American Under Ground" (AUG) and that we would work with any Klan groupe to try to get the Klan under one leadership and on a sensible program, IF THEY WANT TO BELONG TO THE KLAN, Personally I think the quicker the Klan disbands and burn all their Mask and mumbo Jumbo they will be better off..I think people must organize to educate and work for a better government of the people without Federal controls, To let the individual take back over his business and his country, but it must be done lawfully and politically.

Of late here in Florida in St. Augustine we have had racal trouble but if you will take note you will see that the agitators of both sides were from out of town..Martin Luther King, a communist trained agatator of the Folk school in Mont Eagle Tenn.. Jessie Stoner a fun loving lawyer from Atlanta, Ga. To Stoner this is fun..Lynch a preacher fron Califorina.

Any emotional speaker can work up a crowd today. We cannot ignore the law, but we can ignore these agitators and simply close our doors to both sides...There is still not forced integration, if a person in business don't want to serve anyone no matter what color, let him close and go into another business...I believe in segragation as much as anyone in the south also I believe the Public Accomadation section of the Civil Rights Bill is wrong...A customer can come into my business tell me he don't like the color of my walls and walk out...I as an American and an individual want the same priviledge..I may be wrong but I beleive the Supreme Court will throw this section out.

I could go back and write you a book on this thing, but I won't but I hope I have written you enough to convince you that the Present Klan is no good and serves no good purpose and will only get good people in trouble while the ledders simply go some place elee to organize..

Sincerely yours

Bill Hendrix

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DocId:34702867 Page 4

This memorandum has been disseminated to INTC, Tampa, Florida; U. S. Secret Service, Tampa; Office of Special Investigations, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia; and Office of Naval Intelligence, Charleston, S. C.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

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APPENDIX
I

KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN (KKKK),
also known as Southern Knights
of the Ku Klux Klan (SKKKK),
Southern-Northern Knights of the
Ku Klux Klan (SNKKKK),
Knights of the White Camellia (KOTWC),
Knights of the White Camellia of the
National Christian Church (KOTWC of the NCC),
National Christian Church (NCC),
Order of the Rattlesnake (OTR),
Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire

The August 23, 1949, issue of the Tampa, Florida "Morning Tribune" newspaper contained an article concerning an interview with BILL HENDRIX, Imperial Emperor of the SKKKK, relative to the formation of this new Klan. According to the article, HENDRIX said the organization was an outgrowth of the Klan set up in 1915 by WILLIAM JOSEPH SIMMONS. HENDRIX stated SKKKK was started under the Original Southern Klans, Incorporated, in June, 1948, a branch of which was formed in Tallahassee, Florida, in January, 1949.

Original Southern Klans, Incorporated, has been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

On December 26, 1956, "The Klansman," described by HENDRIX as the official publication of KKKK, ordered the above named group to again become active in the fight against integration by all lawful means and to destroy Communism, Fascism, and Nazism.

On September 8, 1960, a source reported that all organizations named, with exception of Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire, are merely other names of the KKKK which was still active at that time.

On June 23, 1961, this source advised that in June, 1961, BILL HENDRIX commenced using the name Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire for his Klan and that this is just another name for the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

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DocId:34702867 Page 6

APPENDIX
2

Applications to join the Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire state that it is a voluntary organization fighting for the freedom and rights of white Americans.

On May 17, 1962, this source advised that BILL HENDRIX is still using the name Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as the name of his klan organization and the other names listed above are used whenever it suits him to use them.

On August 20, 1963, this source advised that BILL HENDRIX continues using the name Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as the name of his Klan organization and the other names listed whenever it suits him to use them.

NW 89672
DocId:34702867 Page 7

FD-365 (Rev. 5-14-64)

FOIA (b) (7) - (D)

F B I

Date: 8/3/64

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL _____ AIRMAIL
(Priority)

To: Director, FBI

Att.: Civil Rights Section
General Investigative Division

From: SAC, TAMPA (157-1457) (P)

Subject: AMERICAN [redacted] (AUG)
RM

☐ BOMBING MATTERS - THREATS ☒ RACIAL MATTERS
(00:TP)

Enclosed are eight copies of a letterhead memorandum. Enclosed LHM has been disseminated to IRTC, Secret Service, ONI and CMI. Copy designated for New Orleans as addressee of HEMMIX' letter resides in Mississippi.

[redacted] His identity is being protected in this manner because he sent the copy of the letter attention SA JAMES K. WALLACE, St. Petersburg, Fla., RA, and it will be personally acknowledged by SA WALLACE. An attempt was made to do this on 7/29/64 but [redacted] was away from his residence and business.

It is the opinion of the Tampa Office that this is just another of HEMMIX' attempts to secure publicity and that the AWG exists only in his mind.

Bureau will be kept advised of pertinent developments.

1 - Bureau (Enclosures 8)
1 - New Orleans (Encl 1)
2 - Tampa
(1 - 80-138) (1 - 157-98) (HEMMIX)
(1 - 62-457) JKW:cwp
(1 - 157-3) (8)

SEARCHED ___ INDEXED ___
SERIALIZED ___ FILED ___
AUG 6 - 1964
FBI — NEW ORLEANS

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

157-876-2

NW 89672
DocId:34702867 Page 8

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to File No.

Tampa, Florida

September 14, 1964

AMERICAN UNDERGROUND

Reference is made to a memorandum captioned as above, dated August 3, 1964.

On September 1, 1964, a source with whom insufficient contact has been made to establish his reliability, advised that BILL HENDRIX has no organization named the American Underground (AUG).

Source stated that BILL HENDRIX has done nothing to activate the AUG, and has no plans to activate such an organization.

Source advised that BILL HENDRIX has received requests for information concerning the AUG and has answered them as he did in his letter to JAMES J. COOK, Clingto, Mississippi.

Source stated that BILL HENDRIX claims he was misquoted in the article that appeared on July 24, 1964, concerning the formation of the AUG, and that HENDRIX did not state "We will fight legally as far as we can, and violently if necessary." HENDRIX did say, according to this source, that "We will put on kid gloves and powder puffs and love them to death."

Source stated that HENDRIX claims he does not believe in violence.

This document contains neither conclusions nor recommendations of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

157-876-3

NW 89672
DocId:34702867 Page 9

FD-365 (Rev. 5-14-64)

FOIA (b) (7) - (D)

F B I

Date: 9/14/64

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL
(Priority)

To: Director, FBI

Att.: Civil Rights Section
General Investigative Division

From: SAC, TAMPA (157-1457) (P)

Subject: AMERICAN UNDERGROUND (AUG) 157-2123 * C

☐ BOMBING MATTERS - THREATS ☒ RACIAL MATTERS
(OO: TP)

Re Airtel, 8/3/64.

Enclosed are eight copies of a letterhead memorandum.

LHM has been disseminated to U. S. Secret Service, Tampa, Fla., IRTC, Tampa, ONI, Robins AFB, Ga., and ONI, Charleston, S. C.

One copy is designated for New Orleans, as they received referenced communication.

Bureau will be kept advised of pertinent developments.

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FBI — NEW ORLEANS

1 - Bureau (Enclosures 8) (RM)
(1) - New Orleans (Enc. 1)(RM)
6 - Tampa (157-1457)
(1 - 80-139)(1 - 62-467) (1 - 157-3) (1 - 157-26) 157-876-4
JRM/mw
(9)

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

cc

NW 89672
DocId:34702867 Page 10

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Tampa, Florida
April 6, 1965

BILL HENDRIX

On March 31, 1965, a source, who has furnished reliable information in the past, made available to the FBI the following quoted copy of a letter:

"February 27th. 65

"Un American Activities Committee
Washington, D. C.

"Dear Sirs:

"I note by the daily press that Rept. Richard Schweiker wants an investigation of the Minutement, Christian Youth Corps of St. Petersburg, Florida, and other related organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and others. As a long time leader of the Southern Knights of the Klan (Now Disbanded) we certainly think you should have this investigation, from the top to the bottom. We have asked for this probe many times and on record with your committee there should be many letters from us.

"We have watched many organizations come and go for many years and have records dating way back in history, but what has made many of these organizations has been some loud mouthed public figure such as congressman Schweiker running off at the mouth.

"In our section of Florida we have the best Racial relations of any place in the world and we allow no big mouthed politicalcrats to disturb our tranquility. It seems to us that Rept. Schweiker should get him a broom and do some local house cleaning first, after all we read the papers down h and pretty well know what is going on in his home state.

"In regards to Mr. Orien Potito's Christian You Corps, we believe you will find that Mr. Potito's funds come from people from up north and not from St. Petersbur Florida.

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APR 9 1965
FBI - TAMPA

157-876-5

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DocId:34702867 Page 11

BILL HENDRIX

"I want to request that I be able to testify before your committee. I am not now active in any organization, I am now in the oyster business and trying to devellop an integrated oyster for all peoples of all colors, but I do have the records of the present and the past of all the Klans of which there were about sixteen differant groupes in Florida, also of many communist and enemies of your comittee. Fact is we used to give out badges down here to GRAND DRAGONS to keep them from organizing each other and now we are writing a book "THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KU KLUX KLAX." So please let us testify at any hearing you may have in our territory.

"Sincerely

"/s/ BILL HENDRIX"

On March 31, 1965, this same source advised a Special Agent of the FBI that the Southern-Northern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was BILL HENDRIX's Klan and that HENDRIX had through the years used other names for this Klan such as Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, etc.

A characterization of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is attached.

On April 3, 1965, this same source made available a copy of the following quoted letter:

"Bill Hendrix
Box 47 Oldsmar, Florida
April 1st. 1965

"House Committee on
un American Activities
Washington, D. C.

"Dear Sirs:

We note by the daily press that your committee may in the future have an investigation of the Ku Klux Klan and other organizations. As old members and leaders of the Klan here in Florida and over the nation we would welcome this investigation and give to your committee any information which we have in regards to Klan activity.

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BILL HENDRIX

"We would like to request your committee to set up a hearing here in our locality, either in Tampa, Florida, or St. Petersburg, Florida, and go into hearings of Klan type organizations and those organizatizations which have opposed your committee.

"I believe if you will look on your records you will find that the 'Southern Northern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan' has a long file. We disbanded in 1960 because we found that a Klan groupe could not operate their program without going outside the law. The very name Klan to many people today means working outside the law and many of the new Klan Leaders know nothing about the laws and care less.

"We believe the southern politicians are to blame for the plight of the south and that men such as Fabus, Barnett and Wallace are wrong and are the cause of most of the unlawful actions now being practiced in the south.

"Many of the so called right wing leaders useally wind up in our area and we have for the past few years kept tabs on them. Each has a small following here such as the 'National States Rights Party' 'Oren Potito and his so called Christian Youth Movement' 'The Nazi Party of Rockwell' and many communist fronts and enemies of your committee.

"In our section we have had no racial trouble simply because we don't allow the outside agitators to invade us. We have no critizism of the federal Bureau of Investigation nor of your committee, but we do think that the American people are poorly informed about the role of politicans and public officials in the matter of civil rights.

"While in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1958 at a national Klan rally those of our groupe withdrew from Klan activity and requested all Klan groupes to disband, later we gave our story to Mr. Ralph McGill of the Atlanta Constitution and he printed the story nation wide. We still say that the Klan must operate outside the law under its present programs.

"Very sincerely

"BILL HENDRIX
Box 47 Oldsmar, Florida"

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BILL HENDRIX

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

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APPENDIX
1

KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN (KKKK),
also known as Southern Knights
of the Ku Klux Klan (SKKKK),
Southern-Northern Knights of the
Ku Klux Klan (SNKKKK),
Knights of the White Camellia (KOTWC),
Knights of the White Camellia of the
National Christian Church (NCC),
Order of the Rattlesnake (OTR),
Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire

The August 23, 1949, issue of the Tampa, Florida "Morning Tribune" newspaper contained an article concerning an interview with BILL HENDRIX, Imperial Emperor of the SKKK, relative to the formation of this new Klan. According to the article, HENDRIX said the organization was an outgrowth of the Klan set up in 1915 by WILLIAM JOSEPH SIMMONS. HENDRIX stated SKKK was started under the Original Southern Klans, Incorporated, in June, 1948, a branch of which was formed in Tallahassee, Florida, in January, 1949.

Original Southern Klans, Incorporated, has been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

On December 26, 1956, "The Klansman", described by HENDRIX as the official publication of KKKK, ordered the above named group to again become active in the fight against integration by all lawful means and to destroy Communism, Fascism, and Nazism.

On September 8, 1960, a source reported that all organizations named, with exception of Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire, are merely other names of the KKKK which was still active at that time.

On June 23, 1961, this source advised that in June, 1961, BILL HENDRIX commenced using the name Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire for his Klan and that this is just another name for the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

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DocId:34702867 Page 15

APPENDIX
2

Applications to join the Konsolidated Ku Klux Klans of the Invisible Empire state that it is a voluntary organization fighting for the freedom and rights of white Americans.

On August 11, 1964, this same source advised that HENDRIX continues to use the name Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as the name of his klan organization and that the other names listed above are used by him whenever it suits him to use them.

NW 89672
DocId:34702867 Page 16

FD-36 (Rev. 5-22-64)

FOIA (b) (7) - (D)

F B I

Date: 4/6/65

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (157-1352)

FROM: SAC, TAMPA (157-26) (P)

BILL HENDRIX, aka
RM
(CO:TP)

Enclosed for the Bureau are 8 copies of an LHM and two copies of FD-376.

Enclosed LHM has been furnished to G-2, Ft. McPherson, Ga., INTC and U. S. Secret Service, Tampa, Fla.; OSI, Robins AFB, Ga., and ONI, Charleston, S. C.

[redacted]

Bureau is aware that HENDRIX has in the past been prone to be loose with the truth and to make statements he felt would result in his aggrandizement, etc.

HENDRIX mentions the Christian Youth Movement in his letter and this no doubt refers to the Christian Youth Corps, concerning which the Bureau is aware.

3 - Bureau (Encls - 0)
9 - Tampa
(1 - 62-467)
(1 - 157-3)(KKKK)
(1 - 157-312) (POTITO)
(1 - 157-1435) (CYC)
(1 - 157-7) (ANP)
(1 - 157-45) (NSRP)
(1 - ~~62-467~~)
JEW:cwp 80-139
(12)

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FBI — JACKSON

Files

157-576-6

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Special Agent in Charge

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As the Bureau is also aware, HENDRIX is prone to make statements which he later denies or says he was misquoted in and it is believed that any appearance by HENDRIX before any committee would be for the sole purpose of HENDRIX being able to use the forum for his own personal advantage.

HENDRIX did not offer to make available to the FBI the "records" he refers to in his letter to the committee.

This matter will be followed and the Bureau will be kept advised of pertinent developments.

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DocId:34702867 Page 18

4/7/65

AIRTEL AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (157-1352)

FROM: SAC, TAMPA (157-26)

BILL HENDRIX — 157-2-A-2152
-2360
RACIAL MATTERS 157-576-1
-2
(OO: TP)

Re TP airtel to Bureau 4/6/65.

Enclosed for Atlanta and Jackson for information is one copy each of referenced airtel and enclosed LHM dated 4/6/65.

On 4/6/65 BILL HENDRIX advised with regard to his statements in his letters dated 2/27/65 and 4/1/65 to the House Un-American Activities Committee which are quoted in the above mentioned LHM that he only has the organizational structure of the klan mentioned in his letters to the committee.

HENDRIX stated that his klan, the Southern-Northern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (HENDRIX has used various names for this klan group through the years, including most recently Knights of the Ku Klux Klan) has never been affiliated with any other klan group.

HENDRIX stated he gave the list of officers of his klan in Florida to JOHN WOOD, Un-American Activities Committee several years ago.

3-Bureau
1-Atlanta (Encls. 2) (Info)
1-Jackson (Encls. 2) (Info)
4-Tampa
(1-157-3)(KKKK)
(1-170-94-A)
JEW:ejt
(9)

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SERIALIZED FILED
APR 9 1965
FBI — JACKSON

Files

157-576-7

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TP 157-26

HENDRIX stated that he had written RALPH McGILL, Atlanta, Georgia, in the past his views on klan activities and planned to write him again.

[redacted]

HENDRIX stated he could not identify the members of his klan in Florida because at many meetings those present were robes, etc.

As the Bureau is aware, HENDRIX is known to be a liar and one who seeks any forum he can get to expound his philosophy.

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